

Valerius Maximus in a Fourteenth-Century French Translation: An Illuminated Leaf

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THE REIGN OF King Charles V of France (1364–80) witnessed an extraordinary flowering of book production. Under the king's patronage, the royal library established in a tower of the Louvre grew to over seven hundred titles, a number unsurpassed in Europe at the time.¹ Prominent among them were French translations of Latin texts. A previously unpublished leaf in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 1) can be identified by its opening rubric as the first page from an early copy of the translation of the *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium* by the Roman author Valerius Maximus, commissioned from Simon de Hesdin by Charles V.² The leaf is of interest for its fine quality and lively illustrations and for the historical circumstances under which it was created. Although its artist and provenance cannot be determined at this time, it can be securely dated to the last quarter of the fourteenth century and closely associated with several surviving manuscripts of Valerius Maximus, all of which reflect the thriving manuscript industry given impetus by Charles V.

Charles V's principal motivation for these literary efforts in the early aftermath of the Hundred Years' War may have been a search for political lessons, in which classical texts such as Valerius Maximus's work abounded.³ The *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium*, written in the first century A.D. and dedicated to the emperor Tiberius, was intended for use in schools of rhetoric. The text drew heavily on Roman history and particularly on its treatment by Livy, Cicero, and Sallust. Divided into nine parts, the *Memorabilium* is a compilation of anecdotes in ninety-one chapters illustrating various themes. The first book focuses on religious practices and ceremonies; the second concerns civil and military institutions; Books III to VI

expound on virtues and moral qualities. Though slightly less cohesive, Book VII treats the nature of happiness, Book VIII public and private judgments, and Book IX luxury and avarice.⁴

In addition to the translation of Valerius Maximus by Simon de Hesdin, Charles sponsored such works as Raoul de Presle's translation of St. Augustine's *City of God*, Denis Foullechat's of John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus*, and Nicole Oresme's of Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Politics*, and the pseudo-*Economics*.⁵ The king's self-conscious role in this flurry of intellectual activity is

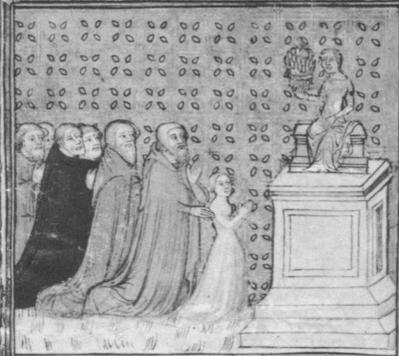
1. See the discussion in *La Librairie de Charles V*, exh. cat. (Paris, 1968); and L. Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V* (Paris, 1907).

2. The verso is a full page of script, with each column measuring 248 × 80 mm., undecorated except for blue and red paragraph indications. The leaf came to the Museum with the bequest of Gwynne M. Andrews, a New York lawyer, which included a number of manuscript leaves and other works of art, chiefly Italian and French bronzes. At the time of its acquisition in 1931, the leaf was identified as part of a text of Valerius Maximus and catalogued as French, 15th century. The miniatures were identified by the late Bonnie Young, former associate curator of The Cloisters.

3. *La Librairie*, intro., p. 87; Claire Richter Sherman, "Some Visual Definitions in the Illustrations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* in the French Translation of Nicole Oresme," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977) p. 321. For a discussion of Charles V's politically motivated patronage in other media see Pierre Pradel, "Art et politique sous Charles V," *Revue des Arts* 1 (1951) pp. 88–94.

4. The outline of Valerius's work is taken from G. F. Warner, *Valerius Maximus Miniatures of the School of Jean Fouquet* (London, 1907) pp. 1–2.

5. On the translation of St. Augustine see Sharon Olf Dunlap Smith, "Illustrations of Raoul de Praelles' Translation of St. Augustine's *City of God* Between 1375 and 1420," Ph.D. diss. (New York University, 1974); on the Aristotle manuscripts see Sherman, "Aristotle," pp. 320–330. For a listing of the commissions



Et commence valerius maximus
translat de latin en francois par

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de ce ste doulemente
de temporelle. Et
la confidence de la
confiance et de la
liberte de fortune.
l'ambicion aussi
de la volonte et de

l'apensie humaine. sont les causes par
quoy le roy n'ay pas fait acc commuence
le royaume de ce l'ime. Car se pense
auec moins ou auoir en bonance

maistre simon de bedm alantasse de es
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deesse chose fine qui moult tost et ligre
ientent pense auoir e fa empeschee par
aucunes des causes deuant dites. Car
respondez par malice d'au pour proie
ue il me fault fine aucunes declaraci
ons necessaires pour l'entendement
de ce l'ime qui est moult fort abien ent
de au moins selon ce que il seuble a
mon petit entendement. Et premierement
donques est assavoir que en ce l'ime cy
aussi que en ceus autres l'imes et autres
choses naturelles et artificielles par m.

fin

1. Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium* (*Faits et dits mémorables*), single leaf, beginning of Book I, ca. 1380. Tempera and gold on vellum, 15 $\frac{5}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (389 × 295 mm.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Gwynne M. Andrews, 31.134.8

emphasized in the illumination of the presentation copy of Oresme's Aristotle (Figure 2). The top left quadrant shows the translator offering his work to the sovereign, a scene frequently represented in manuscripts prepared for the king. The fact that Charles wears a master's cap instead of a crown suggests that he wished to be considered an academic as well as a monarch. The lower left medallion further emphasizes the king's appreciation of scholarship: he attends a lecture, probably on Aristotle's teachings, in the company of other students.⁶

Furthermore, Charles's sense of history and his own place in it are reflected in his ordering the continuation of *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*. This history of the French monarchy, prepared at St.-Denis in the thirteenth century, was amended at Charles's request to include his father and himself, affirming his rightful tenure of the throne of France—challenged by the English in the Hundred Years' War—and linking the Valois and Capetian dynasties.

The scholarly nature of the king is stressed in the writings of Christine de Pisan, Charles's laudatory biographer, and those of other contemporaries, who spoke of his love of reading and listed the translations prepared at his request.⁷ A letter to Charles V from the chancellor of the university of Paris particularly recommended Sallust, Livy, Suetonius, and Valerius Maximus for the dauphin's intellectual and moral preparation.⁸ Charles V's own admiration for Valerius is suggested by his deathbed speech, which included a discussion of the responsibilities of princes that is a direct quotation, whether by the sovereign or by his chroniclers, of the *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium*.⁹

This rich source was infrequently tapped by medieval scholars—exceptions are John of Salisbury and Vincent of Beauvais¹⁰—though library inventories list Valerius's work among their holdings from Carolingian times. An edition was prepared by Lupus Servatus, abbot of Ferrières, in the ninth century.¹¹ Copies, though far from abundant, were at Bec, Corbie, Limoges, and Pontigny.¹²



2. Aristotle, *Les Ethiques*, fol. 2v (detail), after 1372. Tempera and gold on vellum, leaf 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (320 × 215 mm.). Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms. 9505-06 (photo: Bibliothèque Royale)

The text was included among the manuscripts purchased in 1317 by Pope John XXII for his residence at Avignon.¹³ A guest at that court, Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro, a member of the Hermits of St.

and translations undertaken during the reign of Jean le Bon and Charles V, see, particularly, François Avril, *Manuscript Painting at the Court of France: The Fourteenth Century (1310-1380)* (New York, 1978); idem in *Les Fastes du Gothique: Le Siècle de Charles V*, exh. cat. (Paris, 1981); and *La Librairie*.

6. Avril, *Manuscript Painting*, p. 105.
7. For more on Christine de Pisan and Charles V see Claire Richter Sherman, *The Portraits of Charles V of France (1338-1380)* (New York, 1969) pp. 9-12.
8. Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limburgs and Their Contemporaries* (New York, 1974) p. 21.
9. Sherman, *Portraits*, p. 12.
10. Warner, *Valerius Maximus*, p. 1.
11. R. J. Gariépy, "Lupus of Ferrières: Carolingian Scribe and Text Critic," *Mediaeval Studies* 30 (1968) pp. 95-96.
12. M. A. Berlincourt, "The Relationship of Some Fourteenth Century Commentaries on Valerius Maximus," *Mediaeval Studies* 34 (1972) p. 362.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 361.

Augustine and a friend of Petrarch, saw in Valerius's work a source of moral lessons. Believing that the author's underlying message was hindered by the brevity of the text, Dionigi prepared a commentary to interpret and expand the matter-of-fact treatise.¹⁴ The date of the commentary is not known, but it has been suggested that it was not finished until Dionigi was in residence at the court of Robert I, king of Sicily, sometime between 1327 and 1341.¹⁵

This work sparked the production of manuscripts of Valerius Maximus, both in the original Latin and in translation, often with commentaries based on Dionigi's.¹⁶ Simon de Hesdin, the French translator for Charles V named in the rubric of the Metropolitan Museum leaf, also prepared a commentary. Prefaced in his text by the signal *translateur*, his contributions rely to a large extent on Dionigi's work.

As his name suggests, Simon probably came from the town of Hesdin in the Artois. He was a member of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, a religious community not usually noted for its scholarship.¹⁷ Although it is not known how he came to the attention of Charles V, the king's favorable opinion is revealed by his command to the Prior of France in 1377 that Simon be released from his duties at Eterpigny, east of Amiens, and allowed to come to Senlis, nearer Paris, "comme il ait pleu au roy nostre sire qui a moult agréable avoir souvent pres de li religieuse sage et discret personne maistre Symon de Hedín."¹⁸

The presentation copy of Simon de Hesdin's translation of the first four books of Valerius Maximus gives the date 1375 in its opening rubric. Included in the 1380 inventory of Charles V's library, and now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris,¹⁹ it bears the coat of arms of Charles V at the bottom of the first leaf. The illumination for Book I represents in the upper quadrants the Latin author and French translator as scribes preparing the texts (Figure 3). In the single lower scene, Simon de Hesdin presents the book to the king.

The illumination of the corresponding single leaf in the Metropolitan Museum is divided into equal quadrants (Figure 1). The top left scene has a tessellated background of blue, red, and gold. A cleric in the garb of the Hospitalers kneels and offers a book to a king, crowned and seated on a faldstool. The king, in a blue, ermine-trimmed robe, is accompanied by four attendants—a mace-bearer, a bearded man in orange, a gesturing figure in a jeweled hat with a



3. Valerius Maximus, *Faits et dits mémorables*, fol. 1 (detail), 1375. Tempera and gold on vellum, leaf 13 × 9¹/₁₆ in. (330 × 230 mm.). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 9749 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)

turned-up brim, and a man in a blue robe with an ermine collar.

The top right scene takes place against a gridded orange background with a fleury quatrefoil pattern.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 364. Dionigi also prepared a commentary on Virgil.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 370ff.

16. For a list of manuscripts of Valerius Maximus see Dorothy M. Schullian, "A Revised List of Manuscripts of Valerius Maximus," *Miscellanea Augusto Campana*, Medioevo e Umanesimo 45 (Padua, 1981); *idem*, "A Preliminary List of Manuscripts of Valerius Maximus," *Studies in Honor of Ullmann* (St. Louis, 1960). I am grateful to Miss Schullian for letting me know of some of her additional findings before the revised publication appeared. The Metropolitan Museum leaf appears in the revised list. Several manuscripts that are cited as French translations of the 14th century are not discussed here since their illuminations are clearly of the 15th century.

17. A. Luttrell, "Jean and Simon de Hesdin: Hospitalers, Theologians, Classicists," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 31 (1964) pp. 137–140.

18. Luttrell, "Jean and Simon de Hesdin," p. 138.

19. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 9749. For a thorough discussion of this manuscript see *La Librairie*, no. 190, p. 109; L. Delisle, *Recherches*, I, pp. 114–115; II, no. 986, p. 162, for the inventory description; *Manuscrits à peintures du XIIIe au XVIe siècles*, exh. cat. (Paris, 1955) no. 122, p. 60.

Seated on a large scholar's chair, a figure in a long robe and skullcap gestures to an emperor and knights approaching from the right under a banner with the double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire. The bearded and crowned emperor holds a raised sword and an orb in his gloved hands. One of the knights carries a shield charged also with the imperial eagle.

At the lower left, against a pale yellow and gilded backdrop decorated with voided quatrefoils, six bearded men in hooded robes of blue, black, and gray kneel behind a young fair-haired maiden before a golden image of a seated woman holding a sheaf of grain.

The lower right scene has a diaper backdrop in blue, red, and gold. At the entrance to a church, rendered with Gothic tracery and surmounted by a small bell tower, stand two ecclesiastics, one raising his right hand toward the figure of a bishop facing him. The bishop holds a censer in his right hand, while he raises his left arm to the gesturing figure; his miter is shown in mid-air behind him. The exterior wall of the church is cut away to reveal a tonsured figure genuflecting before a cloth-covered altar, holding an incense boat in his left hand and swinging a censer high in the air with his right.

The top left compartment of the Metropolitan Museum leaf clearly commemorates Charles's royal commission; as in the lower register of the presentation copy, Simon de Hesdin is shown offering the text of Valerius Maximus to the king. The miniature at the top right, however, probably represents Emperor Tiberius before Valerius Maximus, since none of the stories in the first book of the text corresponds to the illustration. The emperor's high-domed crown is clearly differentiated from Charles V's open royal crown. Although the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V's contemporary, is consistently shown wearing a high-domed crown in *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* of 1375–79,²⁰ here the double-headed eagle on the shield and banner and the imperial crown are used to suggest the empire of ancient Rome, a common medieval device.²¹ A representation of Tiberius before Valerius Maximus establishes a suitable counterpart to the scene of Simon de Hesdin and his patron Charles V, reflecting the ancient as well as the contemporary ruler's deference to scholarship, as suggested for Charles V in the illumination of Aristotle's *Ethics* (Figure 2).

Both compartments of the lower register in the

Metropolitan Museum leaf illustrate episodes from the first book of Valerius Maximus on religious rites and ceremonies. Valerius relates that the Etrurians sent to the town of Velia for a priestess to preside over the cult of the goddess Ceres.²² The miniature at the lower left shows the priestess, Calcitana, leading the worship in front of the gilded image of the goddess of the harvest—identified by the sheaf of wheat in her right hand. To depict this, the illuminator converts to pagan use the Christian scene of a worshiper kneeling before the image of the Virgin and Child, often represented in Gothic art.²³

The lower right scene illustrates the fourth note in Book I, chapter 1: "Sulpicius, au milieu d'un sacrifice, eut le malheur de laisser tomber son ornement de tête, et cet accident lui enleva le ministère des autels."²⁴ In the illumination of this episode, the substitution of contemporary costume for Roman is again apparent: Sulpicius, the Roman priest, is vested as a fourteenth-century bishop, and the "ornament" falling from his head is a miter. The censer that he holds in his right hand suggests the interruption of the sacrifice, since at the altar of the temple—here represented as a Gothic church—another ecclesiastic is censuring.

Though the scenes differ, the presentation copy's title page and the Metropolitan Museum leaf share a common repertoire. Figures stand on shallow ground lines in a space rendered in uneasy perspective, within compartments with tessellated and diapered backgrounds. The presentation of the book is

20. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 2813. See Sherman, *Portraits*, pls. 33–35.

21. For example, the imperial crown and eagle are similarly used in the costume of Julius Caesar in the Heroes Tapestries at The Cloisters, MMA acc. no. 47.101.3.

22. Book I, chap. 1, part 1. For a translation into modern French see C. Frémion, *Valère Maxime: Faits et paroles mémorables* (Paris, 1827). I am grateful to Bonnie Young for having brought this translation to my attention. There is an incunabulum of Simon de Hesdin's translation in the Rosenwald Collection in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Berlincourt, "Fourteenth Century Commentaries," n. 51).

23. The image can be seen in such diverse works as the tympanum of the north transept of Notre-Dame, Paris, the *Hours of Yolande de Soissons*, and the hymns of the Virgin, *Las Cantigas* of Alfonso X. A similar adaptation of Christian iconography for illuminated manuscripts of Aristotle was noted by M. Thomas in *La Librairie*, p. xviii, and affirmed by Sherman, "Aristotle," p. 325.

24. Frémion, *Valère Maxime*, p. 11.



Et romme le liure de valerius aya
mus avec la declaration breche li
ure et addicions plusieurs faite et

Et breche et fugiute
de ceste dolereuse vie
temporele. la contri
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de la volente et de la pensee huma
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fait aor saignement le prologue de
ce liure. Car ie peusse bien auoir pro
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nes des causes deuant dites. Toute
vois par maniere de vn petit plume
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necessaires pour l'entendement de ce
liure qui est n'ist fort a bien entēdre
au mains selon ce que il semble a
mon petit entendement. Premier
ment conques est assauoir que en
ce liure a aussi que en to' autres lius

compilee en lan de nostre seignour
anl. cc. lxxv. y fit luyng de vrdm
de lordie. s. jehan de thom de ce en ty
et autres choses naturelles et artificiele.
y a quatre causes principales. Cest as
sauoir cause materiele cause forme
le cause finale et cause efficient. La
cause materiele de ce liure est les fins
et les vis des romains et des autres
gens que valerius appelle estrange
et generalment vices et vert' ou au
cunes de leur circonstances. La cause
formele est double car il y a forme de
traictier et forme du traictie. la four
me du traictier est le brief et noble
sille de la maniere de son parler. la
forme du traictie est la division du
liure en plusieurs liures et en plus
chapters. La cause finale ou finale
de ce liure est entredire toutes ges
a fleur les vertus et a four les vices
et aussi que on puist auoir legiere
ment exemples a vestons propos
pour faire le bien et pour echuer
le mal. Et quoy il ensieut dierent



4. Valerius Maximus, *Faits et dits mémorables*, fol. 1, ca. 1380. Heightened grisaille on vellum, 12⁵/₈ × 9¹/₄ in. (320 × 232 mm.). Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 261 (photo: Bibliothèque Municipale)

shown on both leaves. In neither do the king's individual features—notably his long, pointed nose—appear, whereas in other presentation scenes his portrait is quite distinct. In both the king is crowned, unlike his appearance in the presentation scene in Figure 2.²⁵ In both he is accompanied by courtiers or advisers and a mace-bearer; Simon de Hesdin appears with the cross of his order on his shoulder.²⁶ Elements of furniture, such as the scholar's chair and the king's faldstool, are the same. Despite differences in figure style, the costume and posture of the scribe at the upper left of the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript are comparable to those of the seated figure in the top right compartment of the Metropolitan Museum leaf.

The rubricated introduction to this leaf is shorter than the one on the copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale and does not include a date; Charles's name is not mentioned on the Bibliothèque Nationale title page, the coat of arms perhaps standing in its place.

Three other manuscripts of Valerius Maximus may be compared to the Metropolitan Museum leaf. One in the Bibliothèque Municipale in Troyes, in highlighted grisaille with no patterned background, has strong compositional similarities (Figure 4).²⁷ The top register and lower left quadrant present the same scenes with only slight variations. Charles V's advisers stand behind Simon de Hesdin; a town wall takes the place of the knights behind Tiberius. Valerius is shown holding a book, a less awkward pose than that in the New York example. Though the disciples of Ceres are grouped differently, the scene is essentially the same, even in the perspective of the goddess's pedestal. Only the fourth scene, showing Romans worshipping idols,²⁸ is unrelated.

In an even more closely related manuscript, now in the Universitäts-Bibliothek in Jena (Figure 5),²⁹ all four scenes are the same as on the Metropolitan Museum leaf, modified only in certain details. There are fewer figures in the presentation scene. Tiberius lacks the attribute of the double-headed eagle; Valerius Maximus holds a book, as in the Troyes example (Figure 4), which makes him more immediately rec-

ognizable as a scholar. Ceres again holds a sheaf of wheat, but in the Jena illumination she also wears a headdress of wheat stalks. The priestess of Ceres has the same coiffure, and she is placed in the same relationship to the first worshiper behind her. Again transformed into a bishop, whose miter is shown falling from his head, this Sulpicius faces away from the church as he leaves it; the figure censing at the altar, however, is missing, making it less clear that the mishap to Sulpicius's headgear has occurred during a sacrifice. The decoration of the Jena leaf is more elaborate, with more plentiful ivy in the margins and more decorative quadrilobe medallions.

Finally, a fourteenth-century copy is preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (Figure 6).³⁰

25. In Sherman, *Portraits*, the differences among types of Charles V portraits are considered. Pls. 8, 10, 14, and 15, for example, illustrate examples in which the king's features are easily recognized. The author distinguishes between manuscripts that show the king as a scholar and those in which he is represented with a crown, considering the former characteristic of manuscripts produced in the 1360s and the latter of those produced in the early and mid-1370s (p. 32).

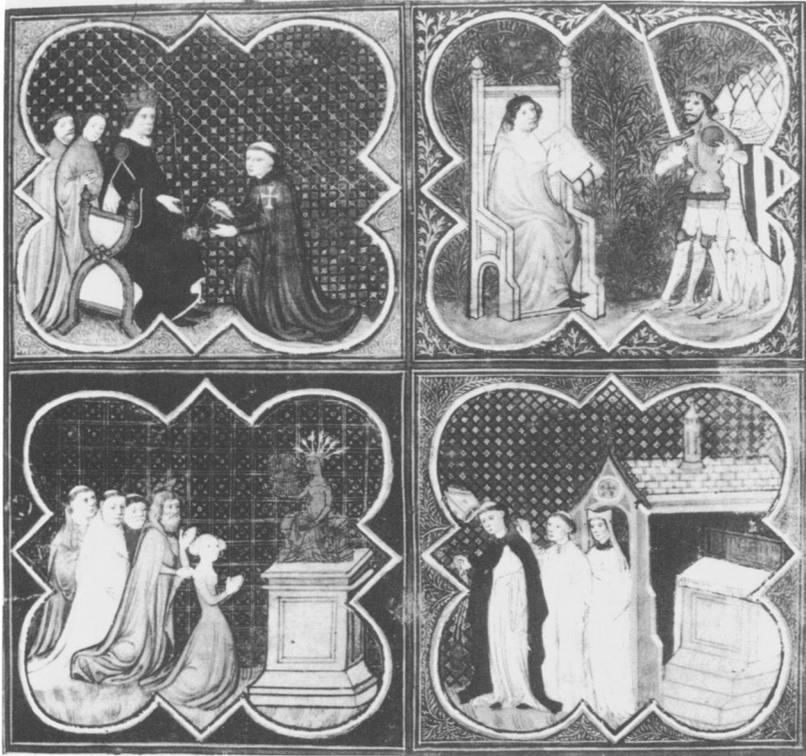
26. Identified in *Manuscrits à peintures*, p. 122. In the Metropolitan Museum example, the cross is white; in the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript, it is blue.

27. Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 261, published in Schullian, "Revised List of Manuscripts." From 1483 until the French Revolution this manuscript was in the cathedral library at Troyes. The manuscript was given to the cathedral library by Bishop Louis Raquier before 1483; according to a colophon on fol. 279v, it had previously belonged to Jean I de Foix (d. 1483). I am grateful to Françoise Bibolet for providing this information and a photograph of the title page. See Françoise Bibolet, "La Bibliothèque des chanoines de Troyes," *Mémoires de la Société Académique de l'Aube* 104 (1964–66) pp. 150, 173, and Lucien Morel Payen, *Les Plus Beaux Manuscrits et les plus belles reliures de la Bibliothèque de Troyes* (Troyes, 1935) pp. 138–140, pl. xxvii, no. 92.

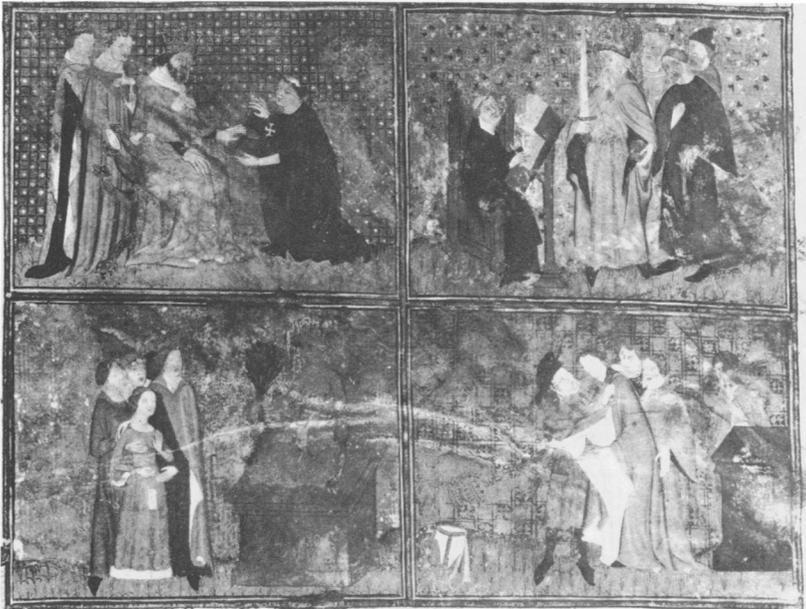
28. The scene is repeated on the title page of a manuscript of Valerius Maximus of about 1410 now in the collection of Martin Breslauer, New York. It was reproduced in the sale catalogue of the Dyson Perrins collection, Sotheby's, London, Dec. 1, 1959, no. 68, pl. 18.

29. Jena, Universitäts-Bibliothek, ms. gallica 87/88. Published in L. Olschki, *Manuscrits français à peintures des bibliothèques d'Allemagne* (Geneva, 1932) p. 29; Walter Dexel, *Untersuchungen über die französischen illuminierten Handschriften der Jenaer Universitätsbibliothek: Vom Ende des 14. bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Strasbourg, 1917) pp. 1–23. I am grateful to Professor Dr. Bohmüller, director of the Universitäts-Bibliothek, for information and for the photograph of the beginning of Book I.

30. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Res. 8; published in Schullian, "Revised List of Manuscripts," and in Jesús Domínguez Bordona, *Manuscritos con pinturas* (Madrid, 1933) I, p. 317, no. 817.



5. Valerius Maximus, *Faits et dits mémorables*, fol. 3r (detail), ca. 1380. Tempera and gold on vellum, leaf $14\frac{3}{8} \times 11$ in. (365×280 mm.). Jena, Universitäts-Bibliothek, ms. gallica 87/88 (photo: Universitäts-Bibliothek)



6. Valerius Maximus, *Faits et dits mémorables*, fol. 1r (detail), ca. 1380. Tempera and gold on vellum, leaf $14 \times 10\frac{5}{8}$ in. (355×270 mm.). Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Res. 8 (photo: Biblioteca Nacional)

Though its illumination of Book I has been badly damaged by water, it clearly illustrates the same texts as does the Metropolitan Museum leaf. The presentation scene differs in the number of figures but retains the essential composition. Similarly, the scene of the emperor before Valerius Maximus adopts the

format of the Metropolitan Museum example, but lacks the charmingly rendered figures of knights. The Etrurians worshipping Ceres in the company of the priestess are presented as standing rather than kneeling figures. The expulsion of Sulpicius-as-bishop (lower right) acquires new drama as he is wrested from

his place at an outdoor altar, his miter having fallen to the ground.

Each of the five fourteenth-century illuminations known to the author from Book I of Valerius Maximus echoes the often standardized vocabulary of manuscripts made for Charles V in the 1370s. The patterned effect of figures in shallow compartments and checkered backgrounds seen in late thirteenth-century manuscripts was made more precious in the late fourteenth century by the use of more diverse colors and backdrop patterns combined with a wider use of gold.³¹ The portrayal of an author or translator giving a book to the king was ubiquitous, and the division of the illumination into four or more compartments the rule. Compartmentalized scenes in other manuscripts bear a common stamp. Compare, for example, the expulsion of a youth from a lecture shown in the lower right compartment of Figure 2 with the expulsion of Sulpicius from the temple in Figure 1.

Because of their basic stylistic and compositional similarities, all the surviving fourteenth-century manuscripts of Valerius Maximus seem to date from soon after the presentation copy of 1375 and to derive from closely allied workshops. The king may have ordered several copies at the time of his commission, as he is known to have done for Aristotle's *Ethics*.³² If this was the case, however, the additional manuscripts were not placed in his library in the Louvre, which, according to the inventory of 1380, the year of his death, contained only one copy. The presentation manuscript, attributed to the Master of the Coronation of Charles VI, was removed from the library several months before the death of Charles V by his brother Louis I, duke of Anjou, at whose request copies may have been prepared.³³ The Troyes manuscript has been attributed to the Remiet atelier, from which the duke is known to have acquired manuscripts.³⁴

The Troyes example contains the date 1379 in a rubric at the beginning of Book V; a similar date can be suggested for the Metropolitan Museum leaf. The Metropolitan Museum illumination, nevertheless, is finer in quality than the Troyes painting, and it compares favorably with other examples, although common features make such distinctions difficult.

The four illuminated title pages with illustrations based on the text do not depend directly on the presentation copy in Paris and seem to reflect university

production. University regulation of the book trade can be traced to the reign of Philip Augustus (1180–1223), and illuminators were connected to the university at least by 1339.³⁵ Fifteen names were recorded during the reign of Charles V.³⁶ The conservative style of the Valerius Maximus manuscripts, representing figures in shallow space against a decorative background, and generally using the *bâtarde* script, more fluid and quickly produced than the Gothic, signals the wider market controlled by the university rather than a royal commission.

The spread of Charles V's taste for illustrated classical texts in the vernacular doubtless brought new clients, perhaps eager to gain in social stature by their appreciation of fine books, to the workshops in the quartier St.-André-des-Arts.³⁷ Scribes were situated mostly on the rue des Ecrivains (today's rue de la Parcheminerie), while the illuminators were nearby on the then rue des Enlumineurs. Manuscript production was directed by the *stationnaire*. Sometimes himself the scribe, sometimes merely an agent, this individual publisher coordinated the work of scribe, illuminator, and maker of the book cover. One or more ateliers might be involved, depending on the urgency of the commission.³⁸

A manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale and a single leaf now at the Drey Gallery in New York apparently represent the work of one of these ateliers and are probably by the illuminator of the Metropolitan Museum leaf. The scene of Roland and Ferragut in *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* (ms. fr. 2606; Figure 7) shows the same stacking of knights, the same boxy faces and squared outlines of the figures' noses, the same rendering of perspective and definition of ground line. In the Drey miniature of Hannibal receiving a messenger, from a French translation of Livy (Figures 8, 9), the conventions of the Metropolitan

31. The character of late 14th-century manuscripts is discussed by François Avril in his introduction to the manuscript section of *Les Fastes du Gothique*.

32. Avril, *Manuscript Painting*, p. 105.

33. *La Librairie*, p. 109.

34. See Dunlap Smith, "Illustrations," p. 80.

35. Patrick M. de Winter, "Copistes, éditeurs et enlumineurs de la fin du XIVe siècle: La Production à Paris de manuscrits à miniatures," *Actes du 100e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes*, 1975 (Paris, 1978) p. 175.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

7. "Disputoison" of Roland and Ferragut, detail of *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, fol. 122r, late 14th century. Heightened grisaille on vellum, leaf 16¹/₁₆ × 12³/₁₆ in. (427 × 310 mm.). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 2606 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)



8. Livy, *Histoire romaine*, single leaf, beginning of Book II, ca. 1380. Tempera and gold on vellum, 16¹/₁₆ × 12³/₁₆ in. (430 × 310 mm.). New York, Paul Drey Gallery (photo: Paul Drey Gallery)



9. Detail of Figure 8, *Hannibal Receiving a Messenger* (photo: Paul Drey Gallery)



Museum leaf are again present. The knights, with their mail, plate armor, and striped, pointed shoes, are identical in almost every detail. The emperor's seat shows the now familiar skewed perspective. Like the Metropolitan Museum leaf, this illumination may have basic elements also found in a royal copy (the one belonging to Charles V is in the Bibliothèque Ste.-Geneviève in Paris),³⁹ but does not share its style, ambition, or audience.

Patrick de Winter has assembled an invaluable collection of documents concerning the Paris workshops and their production. Unfortunately, none of his published accounts and inventories for the years 1375–1405 mentions manuscripts of Valerius Maximus, though other manuscripts—secular as well as religious—are often specified, as in the record of payment of 160 gold *écus* to Robert Lescuyer on September 26, 1397, “pour la vendicion d’un livre ou est le *Faict des Roumains*, escript en françois, compilés par Ysidoire, Suetoine, et Lucan.”⁴⁰

Reflecting many of Charles V's royal commissions, the Metropolitan Museum leaf is an important ex-

ample of French illumination as produced by university workshops in the decades just before 1400. Its compartmentalized scenes are traditional rather than innovative. In the rendering of ancient scenes as contemporary events, the painting also follows an established medieval convention. However, the leaf bears witness to the broadening intellectual atmosphere of the court and those under its sway, to the rapid growth of vernacular literature, and particularly to a keen interest in secular and classical texts, a phenomenon too often considered the exclusive province of the Renaissance.

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38. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

39. *La Librairie*, no. 189, pp. 108–109, pl. VII.

40. Winter, “Copistes,” p. 196, citing Bibliothèque Nationale ms. 10431, no. 2292.